

Final Report for 2007
St. John's Grants to Artists
Dale Jarvis – Project "St. John's Storytelling Circle"

The past year has been a great year for the St. John's Storytelling Circle. I hosted the event the second Thursday every month, and invited anyone interested in cultivating the traditional art of Newfoundland storytelling to come share stories. The events were fairly informal, and were open to storytellers and lovers of a good story, with both experienced storytellers and newcomers welcome.

Every kind of story or recitation can be told at the Circle, as long as it's by word of mouth, rather than being read aloud. This past year, we attracted a lot of new and first-time tellers. We had local people, tourists, and people driving in from the Southern Shore and Conception Bay just to attend. The group continuously draws new people — including young people who want to carry on the tradition. We also hosted a visiting teller from South Carolina, Mr Terry Rollins (pictured to right, with yours truly).



For me, storytelling is all about capturing imagination and sparking creativity in others. It develops skills that are applicable to everything from theatre to education to business, and seeing people come out and telling a story, sometimes for the first time, has been very rewarding.

Over the course of 2007, the monthly events drew between 20 and 50 people, depending on the weather and other events downtown. Our most popular nights were a special night of tales for St. Valentine's Day, where we gave out suitably romantic prizes for the tellers of the most romantic, and the most heart-breaking tales, and a night dedicated to recitations.

Costs for the event are low. The rental of the Crow's Nest is \$75 per night, so the \$475 from the City of St. John's covered half of our year's rental fees, and the box-office receipts (I charged \$2 per person) covered the remainder of the rental fees. The Circle turned a small profit in 2007, which was then invested in the St. John's Storytelling Festival in November, as a prize for the annual Tall Tale Competition.

Building on the success of the past year, the St. John's Storytelling Circle continues to run in 2008, the second Thursday of every month (except December) from 7:30-9:30 at the Crow's Nest Officer's Club.



Regular, and crowd favourite, Margaret Hitchens, tells the story of Albert and the Lion.



Chris Brookes gives a recitation.



View of a typical crowd at the Crow's Nest.